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FM AMEMBASSY BRATISLAVA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1735  
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0057  
RUEHPS/AMEMBASSY PRISTINA PRIORITY 0097  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 0445  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BRATISLAVA 000237

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/NCE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/21/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [LO](#) [PARM](#)

SUBJECT: FM KUBIS LUNCH WITH NATO AND EU AMBASSADORS ON MAY 20

Classified By: Lawrence R. Silverman, Deputy Chief of Mission, for reasons 1.4 b and d.

¶1. (C) Foreign Kubis invited NATO and EU Ambassadors to a working lunch on May 20, 2008, and offered the Slovak government's views on Afghanistan, Kosovo, Belarus, the EU and other subjects.

Afghanistan  
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¶2. (C) Kubis said he would personally attend the June 12 conference in Paris, seeing it as a strategy session and donors conference and noting that attendance presupposed continuing contributions to Afghanistan. Recently returned from a trip to Afghanistan with Dutch FM Verhagen and Slovak DefMin Baska, Kubis told us Slovakia will increase its engagement in Afghanistan and wants to advance its strategic partnership with the Dutch there. He mentioned participation in PRTs and OMLTs, but gave no specifics of future numbers for each. Kubis said he would support DefMin Baska in an increase to around 280 troops (¬ big but at least bigger,), which still requires a political decision in Bratislava. Kubis referred to Baska's mention of the possible deployment of special forces in the future, but did not state his own position on this (Comment: we think he would support, but Baska obviously has the lead). Kubis described President Karzai's responses to Kubis's and Verhagen's questions on good governance, fighting corruption, human rights (including a pitch to end the death penalty) and other political issues as positive and good.

¶3. (C) DCM took the opportunity to encourage Kubis, along with DefMin Baska, to conduct public outreach in Slovakia on the value of future Slovak military and civilian contributions to Afghanistan. Para 6 contains an op-ed Kubis authored, which ran in the Slovak press May 21 and which represents the clearest message to the Slovak public encouraging their support for increased deployments. Kubis did not specifically offer his opinion to the Ambassadors on the lifting of caveats (DefMin Baska has told us privately that he supports such lifting and has mooted the idea publicly.) (Note: We understand that while he was in Kabul, Kubis ordered his MFA to begin action to open and staff the Slovak Embassy there. MFA contacts tell us separately that the building is heavily damaged and that bringing it into operation will take some time. They are meanwhile beginning the process of finding people to staff it.

Kosovo  
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¶4. (C) Noting his recent discussions with the UNSYG and U/SYG Gehenno in New York, Kubis stressed the need for UNMIK to stay on the ground, expressed concern about problems getting agreement on EULEX before the Kosovo Constitution kicked in on June 15. He did not predict a timeframe, but, reflecting what we have heard of the UNSYG's stance, Kubis told the Ambassadors there was enough common ground between the UN and EU and with Belgrade and Pristina to work a cooperation deal with the EU. &We cannot move (forward with EULEX) without the UN umbrella.8 Kubis was not more specific about what an "umbrella" presence should be, nor did he mention the possibility of a staged deployment of EULEX. Kubis did not address the bilateral recognition issue (reflecting other comments we have heard that he has no room from his political masters to maneuver on this), other than to say that those EU members who were not willing to recognize now needed to gave their views considered within the EU when deciding on EULEX. In a separate conversation following the lunch, Kubis told the DCM he was pessimistic about the chances for President Tadic's Democratic coalition being able to form the next government.

Belarus, Lebanon, Cyprus, EU Reforms  
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¶5. (C) Recapping Slovakia's recently completed tenure as Chairman of the COE Council of Ministers, Kubis said Slovakia had &tried to do something8 constructive to focus on Belarus. He noted disappointment that the GOB would not allow Slovakia to do more, but cited the bringing together of

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Belorussian current and former judges, including those critical of the Lukashenka regime, as positive. Kubis said he had complained about the GOB,s treatment of the US presence in Minsk and about the deterioration in the GOB,s treatment of political detainees and prisoners. In response to our question on the then-precarious situation in Lebanon, Kubis reiterated Slovakia,s support for the Siniora government, criticized Hizballah for initiating violence in Lebanon and Iran as the primary initiator of Lebanon,s problems. He also criticized Syria for its behavior. He did not address the issue of designating Hizballah a terrorist organization.

¶6. (C) On Cyprus, Kubis noted he had spoken with Cypriot PM Cristofias during the recent EU-Latin American Summit in Lima, and that Chrisofias had been encouraging of Kubis's offer to &contribute to any platform for bicommunal dialogue8 on the island. On the EU, Kubis asked for French Presidency support for reform of the EU external service that would redress what Kubis called significant under-representation of the smaller countries in the Commission and the Secretariat on foreign policy issues. He also mentioned the possibility of an EU consular service vice national consular officers in each embassy.

Relations with Hungary  
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¶7. (C) Kubis said he was not happy with the Hungarian government's recent postponement of PM Gyurscany,s planned visit to Slovakia and noted the MFA was preparing a statement updating the situation. He said that there would be opportunities for the two Prime Ministers to speak with each other in person at multilateral events coming up soon. Kubis described daily relations as very good but that there were certain issues, linked to internal developments and third countries, that make the relationship &very lively.8 He opined that a Gyurcsany visit to Slovakia would take place &sooner or later,8 and the GOS would continue its preparations. (Note: The Hungarian Ambassador attended the lunch but did not comment. The next meeting of the two countries, working group on bilateral relations will take place June 10.)

18. (U) Following on the substance of his luncheon points, FM Kubis had the following op-ed published under his name in the Slovak-language press May 21:

Begin text.

#### Afghanistan Needs Slovakia,s Assistance Force

Based on the UN mandate, for 7 years, the international community has been trying to help Afghanistan,s government enhance security, stabilize the situation and establish democracy and the rule of law. It has not been highly successful. The NATO Summit in Bucharest decided that Afghanistan is the key priority for the entire alliance. This should be mirrored not only by an increase in soldiers within ISAF, but also by more intensive involvement in building Afghanistan,s infrastructure, in civil and education projects, as well as greater help in training Afghan policemen and members of the national army.

NATO countries are not developing their activities in the country in order to rule Afghanistan. Afghans must rule Afghanistan. That is why Afghans must be able to preserve their country,s security against the threat of Taliban terrorism, and face up to corruption and the drug mafia. They, however, need our help. We are increasing the number of our soldiers. Slovakia did not wait for the Summit,s call, but had accepted the call of the NATO Secretary General to help Afghanistan,s government and the Netherlands in the southern province of Uruzgan, and doubled its forces in ISAF. Together with the Defense Minister, we suppose that by 2010, Slovakia could increase the number of its peacekeepers in Afghanistan to 250-280. We have visited Afghanistan in order to find out under what conditions soldiers are to carry out their mission, about their tasks and how the Afghan people perceive their operation in the country. We left convinced

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that we are acting in accordance with the opinions and interests of the Afghan people, that the presence of the peacekeepers is wanted and purposeful and that the best possible conditions will be provided for their operations, including their security.8

End text.

OBSITNIK